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ALEXANDER THE GREAT: A STRATEGY
REVIEW IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ACSC
STRATEGY PROCESS MODEL

MAJOR SAMUEL E. GARCIA   84-0960

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AUTHOR(S) Major Samuel E. Garcia, USAF

FACULTY ADVISOR Major David Talley, ACSC/EDOWA

SPONSOR Major Bernie Claxton, ACSC/EDCJ

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This paper analyzes the strategy formulation of Alexander the the Great using the ACSC Strategy Process Model. It breaks down Alexander's conquest of Persia into National Objectives, Grand Strategy, Military/Political Strategy, and Military/Political Tactics used. It looks closely at the political strategy and tactics used as well as the military strategy/tactics in order to show the close coordination needed between each to achieve Alexander's objectives.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Samuel E. Garcia holds a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Engineering from Texas A&M University, and a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Utah. He was commissioned through the ROTC program in December of 1971 and came on active duty with the Air Force in June of 1972. Major Garcia has worked in the Civil Engineering field since his commissioning and has served in Europe, the CONUS, and Southeast Asia. His last tour was with Headquarters, PACAF at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. Major Garcia completed Squadron Officer's School and Air Command and Staff College through non-resident programs and is a member of the Air Command and Staff College Class of 1984.

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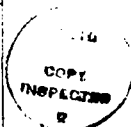
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

A. Background/Significance of the Problem

This paper has been prepared in conjunction with the Great Warriors project. It analyzes the military and political strategies of Alexander the Great during his conquest of Persia and uses the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) Strategy Process Model to gain insight into the derivation and application of Alexander's strategy.

The ACSC text, "Introduction to Strategy", defines strategy as a ". . .process which connects the objective ends with the means of achieving those objectives." (6:7) The process model that is presented by the text centers primarily on the development of military strategy but emphasizes that the attainment of any national objective entails the coordination and use of all the instruments of national power (military, political, and economic). (6:9) The Great Warriors project has performed analyses of the strategies of historical military leaders and attempted to determine whether or not their strategies optimally supported the national objectives with which they were associated.

The study of Alexander the Great provides the student a unique opportunity to observe the development of both political and military strategies in support of a specific national objective. As ruler of Greece and later of a massive empire, and a military commander of the highest order, Alexander not

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only determined the national objectives, he also derived and applied the political and military strategies needed to attain those objectives. While Alexander is routinely listed as one of the great military leaders in history, his expertise as a politician and statesman is sometimes overlooked. The importance of the coordinated use of the military and political instruments is supported by J.F.C. Fuller in his work on Alexander: ". . .had it not been for the genius he displayed as a statesman in his conduct of the war, under no conceivable circumstances could his generalship have accomplished what it did." (9:264)

Alexander's campaigns then, not only comply with the ACSC Strategy Process Model but are in themselves a model of well developed strategy carried out to achieve an objective. In today's world when political vindication is almost as important as military victory, they are a timely and beneficial area of study for the military strategist.

B. Assumptions and Limitations

This paper has been written under the following assumptions and limitations:

(1) the reader is familiar with the ACSC Strategy Process Model. Further background information on the model can be acquired through the ACSC text: "Introduction to Strategy" by LC Dennis M. Drew and Dr. Donald M. Snow (see bibliography).

(2) Since the economic instrument of national power played a minimal role in the conquest of the Persian empire, and never achieved its full potential due to Alexander's early death, economic strategies and actions will be included under the political sections of this paper as they were most closely

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associated with those actions.

C.   Previous Studies

There is a large body of reference material available on the life and campaigns of Alexander. The most useful of these for the purpose of analyzing and comparing military and political strategy is J.F.C. Fuller's "The Generalship of Alexander the Great" on which this study leans heavily.

D.   Objectives of This Study

This paper will analyze Alexander's campaigns in the context of the ACSC Strategy Process Model. To this end it will identify the national or grand objectives pursued by Alexander and discuss the military and political strategies used to achieve those objectives. It will also highlight specific actions in both the military and political realms at the different strategy levels (Grand Strategy, Strategy, and Tactics) and show how these actions served to complement each other and in turn support the overall objective.

Chapter Two

ALEXANDER'S STRATEGY

A. Biographical Sketch

Alexander was born in 356 B.C. in Macedonia (the northern part of modern
Greece), the son of Philip II, the king of Macedonia. At the age of 16
Alexander conducted his first independent military operation in subduing a
revolt that took place in northern Macedonia. Two years later in 338 B.C. he
commanded the left wing of his father's army at the dec ive battle of
Chaeronea in which Philip defeated the allied Greek forces   l won control of
Greece. Philip subsequently founded the League of Corin ʰ ich forged an
alliance between Macedonia and all other Greek states with the Macedonian King
as its hegemon or military leader.

In 336 B.C. Philip was assassinated. Alexander secured the throne of
Macedonia by disposing of all possible rivals and gaining the support of the
army. His forces descended upon a wavering Greece so quickly that the
city-states had no choice but to acknowledge him as Captain-General of the
League of Corinth in succession to his father and thereby virtual ruler of
Greece.

Philip's greatest project was to have been the invasion of Persia.
Alexander resolved to carry out this enterprise; and, with the backing of the
League, he embarked on it in the spring of 334 B.C. After crossing the
Dardanelles, he met and defeated a Persian army led by the local Persian

satraps (governors) at the Granicus (modern Kocabas) River near the Sea of Marmara. This victory opened up Asia Minor to him and with it the strategically important coast of the Aegean Sea. Most of the coastal cities capitulated quickly. Control of the sea coast neutralized the large Persian fleet that could have threatened his lines of supply in the area of the Aegean Sea.

Alexander completed the conquest of Asia Minor and prepared to move down the eastern Mediterranean Coast in late 333 B.C. His intent was to again deprive the allied Persian and Phoenician fleets of their support bases and thereby negate their usefulness. By this time, however, he had attracted the attention of Darius III, King of Kings of the Persian empire. The two men met at the Battle of Issus in October of 333 B.C. Darius, deploying his troops along the Piraeus River, chose a site for the battle at which he was not able to fully deploy his numerically superior army; and Alexander won a decisive victory. His triumph was assured when, during the thick of the fighting, Darius fled the field in fear, thereby seriously demoralizing his troops.

This victory allowed Alexander virtually free access to the eastern Mediterranean coast and the major Phoenician coastal cities. The city of Tyre (in modern Lebanon) put up the most significant resistance by holding out against him for seven months. During the course of the siege, most of the Phoenician navy surrendered and allied itself with Alexander after his capture of the navy's operating bases. With its help, he finally took Tyre. In November 332 B.C., all of Egypt was surrendered by the Persian satrap without a contest, and Alexander was crowned Pharaoh and saluted as the son of the god Amon. During the winter he founded the major port of Alexandria.

With the sea coast as a secure base, Alexander's forces advanced across

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the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers into Persia. They were met by King Darius near Arbela (modern Erbil in Iraq). Using great tactical skill, Alexander overcame a significant Persian numerical advantage, again drove Darius from the field in terror, and destroyed the Persian army. The Battle of Arbela, in October of 331 B.C., for all practical purposes, shattered the Persian Empire.

In the months immediately after Arbela, Alexander occupied Babylon (in modern Iraq) and Susa (now in Iran), two important provincial capitals. Both cities surrendered peacefully and both released huge treasuries. He then took the ancient Persian capital of Persepolis (now in south central Iran), and with it the Persian gold reserve, the hoardings of 200 years of empire. (1:520)

In early 330 B.C., Alexander marched north attempting to physically capture the fleeing Darius and the remainder of the army. He finally overtook the Persians but was too late to prevent the murder of Darius by Persian officers. Darius' death left no obstacle to Alexander's claim to the title of "Great King".

With the title firmly in hand, Alexander proceeded to methodically subdue eastern Persia. Over the next year he founded Alexandria-in-Aria (now Herat in Afghanistan) and Alexandria-by-the Caucasus (near modern Kabul). (2:184)

In the spring of 329 B.C. Alexander crossed the Hindu Kush mountain range and spent the next two years subduing the fierce mountain tribes of northeastern Persia. The Greek army moved as far north as the Jaxartes (modern Syr Darya) River and founded Alexandria Eschate (Alexandria-the-farthest, now called Leninabad in the U.S.S.R.) which was to be the northeastern outpost of the Empire.

Alexander next turned his army toward India in the summer of 327 B.C.

His forces crossed the Indus River, and he formed an alliance with the Rajah of Taxiles. He fought the final major battle of his life in May of 326 B.C. against the Rajah of Porous on the east bank of the Hydaspes (modern Jhelum) River. Using his cavalry brilliantly, Alexander destroyed the Indian army, and, impressed by the valor of the Rajah of Porus, he formed an alliance with him to secure the eastern borde of the Empire.

Alexander finally stopped his eastward progress at the Hyphasis River (modern Beas River in India) in July of 326 B.C. after his troops begged him to turn back to allow them to enjoy the spoils of their years of fighting. He reluctantly agreed, and they returned to the Indus River where he had a great fleet built to transport the army down the Indus to the Arabian Sea. From there by land and sea he led the army back along the coast to Persepolis (January 325 B.C.) where he set about the administration of his domain.

Alexander spent the last two years of his life working on consolidation and integration of the far-flung realm. He died of a fever in June 323 B.C., on the eve of a new expedition to occupy the Arabian peninsula. He was thirty- three years old and had ruled and conquered for only thirteen years.

B.   Background to the Invasion of Persia

Enmity between the Greeks and Persians went back for almost two hundred years before Alexander's time. The Greek cities on the eastern Aegean seacoast, Thrace (much of modern Turkey west of the Bosporus straits), and Macedonia (Alexander's kingdom) were taken by Persian rulers between 546 and 510 B.C. Darius I failed in two attempts to capture Greece in 492 and 490 B.C. (8:491) Xerxes I invaded Greece in 480 B.C.; but after the occupation

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and sack of Athens, he was forced back by the destruction of his fleet at Salamis. (10:1057-1058)

Persia, while it could not militarily defeat the Greeks, showed itself quite adept with other weapons - gold and diplomacy. (2:23) It regularly presented "gifts" to Greek leaders to assist them in efforts to attain supremacy over rival Greek city-states. Thus, for many years prior to Alexander, the Persians kept their Greek enemies disunited and prevented any serious threat to their western boundaries.

The discord and infighting between the major Greek city-states during the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.) allowed Philip II to raise Macedonia from an obscure barbarian kingdom to the leading power in Greece. In recognition of his rising influence, the philosopher Isocrates commended to Philip a Panhellenic program which urged him to

> . . .'take the lead both in securing the harmony of Hellas (Greece) and in conducting the expedition against the barbarians (Persians)' . . . .He suggested that in order to conquer Persia Philip should first free the subjugated Ionic cities (Greek cities in Asia Minor) . . . .This done he urged Philip to 'destroy the whole kingdom, or, if not, to take away from it as much territory as possible'. . .(9:31)

While this program was surely not the only inspiration for Philip's subsequent actions, it does outline concisely the course that he and later Alexander took. Once Greece proper was reunited, it was logical to bring the formerly Greek Ionic cities back to the fold and to punish the Persians for their years of interference into Greek internal affairs. Given the ill will between Greeks and Persians, there is little wonder that the Greek cities were receptive to the idea of invasion when Philip posed it to them shortly before his assassination.

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C. National/Personal Objectives

What were the national objectives pursued by Alexander during his invasion of Persia? This question must be approached somewhat differently for Alexander than for most military leaders. While most commanders are required to support objectives established for them by governments or monarchs, Alexander, as the hegemon of the League of Corinth, was the military dictator of Greece and had the luxury of being able to set national objectives. His personal objectives were, in effect, the national objectives. Since the League was, however, a federation of democratic city-states, it was in the best interests of public relations to secure the support of the League members prior to acting. For this reason the Persian expedition had both public and personal objectives for Alexander.

Publicly, he followed the lead of his illustrious father. Shortly after his installation as hegemon, Philip presented the invasion plan to the League of Corinth.

> . . .Though in Philip's own mind, it may have been a war of
> aggrandizement, he knew that such an aim would not appeal to the
> members of the League so he proclaimed it to be a war of revenge to
> wipe out the crimes perpetrated by Xerxes . . .(a)crusade, which he
> felt would unite the Greeks in common cause. Nor was he mistaken;
> the representatives (of the League) voted for war and appointed
> Philip supreme commander with unlimited powers. . .(9:37-38)

When Alexander secured the leadership of the League, upon his father's death, he adopted the invasion objectives as a political expedient.

While no historian has been able to fix Alexander's personal motives for the invasion, few support the public objectives as the real ones. A closer look at Alexander, produced the following from A.R. Burn:

> . . .Alexander grew up with the idea that conquest on a grand scale
> was the only life work for a man such as he meant to be. It is
> needless to speculate as to his reasons for attacking Persia. As
> has been well said, 'it never occurred to him not to' . . . . (2:16)

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The idea of an initial, relatively limited, objective that evolved in scope as victory followed victory is generally supported by historians. J. F. C. Fuller writes:

> Whatever may have been his actual aim...his first task was to liberate the ancient Greek cities of Asia Minor...in turn their security would have to be guaranteed, and the only practical way to accomplish this was to advance the Aegean frontier eastward. . .Thus. . .Alexander was progressively drawn eastward until complete security could only be guaranteed by the conquest of the entire Persian empire. (9:266)

The intention of conquering the whole of Persia apparently did not fully coalesce until the invasion was well underway.

> It was probably after Issus (333 B.C.)that Alexander first thought definitely of conquering the Persian empire. The alternative was to. . .hold Asia Minor; this meant a defensive war, for Persia was bound to try to recover the sea provinces...Alexander inevitably decided for the offensive as his temperament dictated. (12:36)

His intentions became obvious when, during the siege of Tyre, Alexander received two truce offers from Darius and rejected both. In reply to one he stated. . ."For the future, when you write to me, remember that you are writing, not only to a king, but also to your king." (3:165)

It can be concluded that Alexander's invasion was initially motivated partly by a desire for greater power and glory and partly by a need to secure his eastern borders. His initial personal objective was to secure at least Asia Minor and as much of Persia as he could take. This evolved to the complete conquest and rule of the Persian empire once Alexander realized the empire's weakness and his own relative strength. The objectives put forward for public consumption, which included repatriation of the Ionic cities and a conveniently unspecified "revenge" upon the Persians for the crimes of Xerxes, dovetailed nicely with his own.

D.   Grand Strategy

Grand strategy is defined as the art and science of the development and the coordinated use of the instruments of national power (e.g. military, political, economic) to attain national objectives. Coordination of the instruments is especially important because without it, they can work at cross purposes to each other and hinder or block the attainment of any significant objective. Grand strategy must assign roles and missions to each instrument and determine methods to make the assignments mutually supportive. (6:9)

As noted above, one of Alexander's advantages in the pursuit of his objectives was the fact that as king of Macedonia and hegemon of the League, he not only set the objectives but combined in his person complete control over all national assets. His military, political, and economic strategies could be worked out in concert with the national objectives he chose. If the objectives changed, his strategy could be altered to support them. Such power and the flexibility it allows is the exception much more than the rule.

After the initial successes in Asia Minor, Alexander's objective became the appropriation of the Persian empire. If his conquest was to be of profit to him, he had not only to defeat the Persian army, but also to win his acceptance in the eyes of the Persian peoples. (9:284) Conquest, then, became the mission of the military strategy; acceptance the mission of his political and economic strategies. His military instrument was, of course, the allied Macedonian-Greek army; his political instrument was his own statecraft; and once the Persian treasury at Persepolis was captured, its vast riches became his economic tool. Prior to this, however, the economic instrument played a decidedly secondary role to the other two.

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Alexander realized (as perhaps many men today do not) the way in which the instruments complement each other. The military strategy supported the political and economic ends,

> . . .because as long as the Persian army held the field, there was no certain assurance that the people would willingly accept him. Alexander needed no telling that 'War is only a part of political intercourse, therefore by no means an end in itself'. (9:286)

Conversely, the acceptance and support of Alexander as the rightful, or at least the preferable, successor to Darius by the populace was imperative to allow him to conserve manpower and continue his rapid advances.

> . . .Without a friendly enemy population he would have had to garrison every city and province he occupied, as well as every mile of his communications . . . long before he could have reached the centre of his enemy's empire, his fighting forces would have been whittled to insignificance. (9:267)

Moreover, the long-term task of ruling over a hostile people that far outnumbered the population of Greece would have been impossible. The acceptance of Alexander early in the campaign facilitated not only the conquest of Persia, but also its future administration.

Alexander's grand strategy then proposed to support his overall objectives of conquest and rule through military victories and political and economic actions that would secure the loyalty of the people in the captured areas.

E. Military Strategy

Military strategy is defined as "the art and science of coordinating the development, deployment and employment of military forces to achieve national security objectives." (6:10) Coordination of the three elements is perhaps the most critical aspect of the definition to insure that maximum benefit is derived from the forces available. (6:10)

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Development of the Macedonian army began some 70 years prior to Alexander's birth. By the time of Philip's assassination, it had become the most formidable fighting force in the western world. A major factor in its success was the mix of heavy and light troops it contained which gave it the flexibility necessary to engage any opponent and defeat him.

The backbone of the army was the superbly trained and disciplined infantry. The heavy infantry troops were called "hoplites" and the Macedonians had two types. The most heavily armed were the "pezetaeros." These men wore heavy armor and carried a short sword for close-in fighting. Their main weapon, however was the "sarissa" or long spear (13-15 ft. long). The hoplite held it about 4 ft from the base and, using both hands, stabbed with the point about 10 ft. in front of him. These heavy troops fought from the phalanx formation; a square of men standing about 3 ft. apart and usually 16 men deep. The sarissas extended out in front of the formation and gave the appearance of a hedge of spear points.

> The phalanx generally formed as a rectangle, but its exact
> disposition depended on the situation. It might be square, or
> elongated, or narrowed for a thrust against an enemy;. . .(11:65)

The heavy phalanx formed the base from which the lighter troops and the cavalry operated.

Also classed as hoplites but more lightly armed were the hypaspists. They carried a shorter pike (9-10 ft) and wore lighter armor, but "if anything, the hypaspists were better trained, more highly motivated, faster, and more agile." (7:16) The hypaspists were the most flexible of the Macedonian troops; armed heavily enough to charge with the phalanx in battle, yet lightly enough for skirmishes and mountain warfare. (2:84) In a pitched

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battle they were organized into a phalanx of their own which formed a flexible link between the heavy phalanx and the very mobile cavalry.

To protect flanks and rear, and to keep contact with the cavalry even during the most extended engagements, two forms of light infantry were employed: the peltasts and the psiloi. (7:17) Peltasts wore light armor, and carried a small shield, a sword, and a short spear (4-6 ft). In battle they were usually drawn up in a line behind the phalanxes, or on the flanks. The psiloi, who wore little or no armor, were missile soldiers who carried either bows and arrows, javelins, darts, or slings. At the outset of a battle the psiloi would form up in a long skirmish line in front of the phalanxes and pepper the enemy with their missiles. Just before the opposing infantry formations met, they would dash behind the phalanx or through the narrow intervals between the hoplite columns. (7:17) Both types of light infantry were useful in pitched battles and excelled as skirmishers.

Cavalry was the decisive arm of the Macedonian forces. While earlier Greek cavalry units were used primarily to guard the flanks of the infantry units, the Macedonian cavalry evolved as a separate arm unto itself and eventually surpassed the infantry in relative importance. By Philip's and Alexander's time, their use as shock troops was well established, and they were used in concert with the infantry. (2:85)

Heavy cavalry units carried a spear about 10 ft. long that was light enough to be thrown or heavy enough to be used as a lance. They wore armor much like the Pezetaeros' and carried small shields and short swords. The most elite unit was the Companion Cavalry, made up of nobles who generally associated with the king in peacetime (literally his companions) and whom he personally led into battle. (7:18)

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The lighter cavalry units essentially paralleled the light infantry units.

> . . .The intermediate formations were usually organized as lancers,
> but their weapons and their arms were lighter than those of the
> heavy cavalrymen. . . .
> The light horsemen were cavalry equivalents of the psiloi, and
> like them carried a variety of weapons: javelins, light lances, or
> bows. Their function was screening, reconnaissance, and flank
> protection. . . . (7:19)

Finally, a siege train and artillery park accompanied the army everywhere. It consisted of the essential parts of the seige towers and battering rams used in laying siege to a city; thus allowing the engineers to quickly implement a siege no matter where the location. Additionally the Macedonians were the first in history to use anything like modern field artillery. Lightweight catapults and ballistas (machines for shooting large missiles) were used to cover the infantry's advance particularly in mountain and river crossing operations. (7:20)

These elements of the army, then, provided the basic military assets at Alexander's disposal. Employment of these forces was Alexander's forte. While much of this employment involves battlefield tactics which will be examined more closely later, one area of strategic employment was critical to Alexander's success; his adherence to the maxim of establishing secure bases and lines of communication prior to advancing. In spite of the vast distances that his forces traversed, he never had to seriously worry about rebellion in his rear or his lines of support. This was accomplished by methodical thoroughness and a sound political strategy (to be discussed more thoroughly later).

Prior to leaving Greece he reconquered tribes in northern Macedonia and crushed a budding revolt in the City of Thebes. The first operation achieved

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the military objective of securing his homeland's northern borders, the second accomplished a political objective by wiping out a major source of political opposition to his hegemony. His home base was thereby secured, and from it he struck out against western Persia.

As he moved down the eastern Mediterranean coast, he was aware of his vulnerability to the Persian navy. He told his generals, "I am apprehensive lest, while we advance with our forces toward Babylon..., the Persians should again conquer the maritime districts, and transfer the war into Greece." (9:288) In order to negate that threat he systematically subdued all of the coastal ports, won the allegiance of the Phoenician fleets and occupied Egypt. In doing so he not only deprived Persia of its seapower, but he acquired it for himself, thereby securing the eastern Mediterranian, Greece, and Asia Minor. (9:288) With the entire coastline and most of the major seaports of the ancient world as a base, he was able to project his line of advance into the heart of Persia. (5:14)

After his victory at Arbela, Alexander abandoned his pursuit of Darius to strike at the "material" base of the Persian empire: the treasure stores of Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis. Here again, as with the fleets, Alexander appropriated the foundations of his enemy's power and augmented his own. He became the financial master of Asia and reduced Darius to a pauper. With this material base added to the territorial base he already occupied, he was secure to move in any direction that he chose. (9:289)

While the secure bases provided the foundation for empire, Alexander's lines of communication tied the conquered lands into a whole and allowed his forces to constantly advance.

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Initially, his supplies moved forward in a single artery across the Dardanelles Straits from Greece. As control of the Mediterranean was established, sea lines were set up, first from Greece to Asia Minor, and later directly to Syria from which they were moved overland to Alexander. Land lines made extensive use of the fairly advanced Persian road system, whose main artery ran from Ephesus on the Aegean coast through Babylon and Susa to Taxila in India. (9:77) Along with the minor roads that branched off from this, the roads became the backbone of Alexander's communications/logistics system.

Although little is written of the organization that operated the system, historians agree that depots were established along the main roadways at which supplies were collected from the surrounding countryside. Staging camps for troops must also have been established to provide the constant flow of reinforcements that the army required. Such a flow of troops and supplies, supported by the secure basing strategy, allowed employment of units which were generally well supplied and at full strength and therefore at maximum fighting ability.

Deployment of troops in the strategic sense was not a major factor in Alexander's campaigns. Such deployments are generally carried out prior to an engagement to place the enemy in a disadvantageous position once the battle is joined. While he always chose the time of the encounter, Alexander usually allowed his opponent to choose the place and did not attempt to maneuver him into an unfavorable position.

Alexander's military strategy well supported his goals of conquest and rule. The development of a force with both heavy and light troops gave him the flexibility to overcome every adversary he faced. Alexander's continued

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employment of the troops outward from secure bases supported by secure lines of communication enhanced their effectiveness and ensured success. Strategic deployment of troops was not a major factor in the advance. Alexander's military strategy produced a force that was unstoppable, and, supported by a sound political strategy, far outclassed anything his adversaries were able to field.

F. Political Strategy

A definition of political strategy must parallel that of military strategy if the two are to be viewed as equal players in the pursuit of national objectives. While the instrument of political strategy, statecraft, can be developed and employed, the idea of deployment of such an instrument would not seem to have relevance. For that reason we will define political strategy as the "art and science" of the development and employment of the political instrument of national power, statecraft, in support of national objectives.

In Alexander's case his political strategy was his sharing of power with the conquered peoples, thereby securing their support for his rule. It was developed based on his understanding of the psychology of war and on his experience with his father's method of ruling Greece.

Alexander realized a principle that soldiers and statesmen have often overlooked:

> . . .the goodwill of the civil population is the moral basis for
> military power. It follows from this that there are always two
> fronts in a war; an outer or physical front, the province of the
> general, and an inner, or psychological front, the province of the
> statesman. . .on the former battles are fought with weapons, while
> on the latter they are fought with the ideas enshrined in the policy
> the statesman adopts towards the enemy's peoples. Should his policy
> be such that it progressively detaches them from their

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governments-that is, subverts their loyalty-then increasingly will
the moral foundations of the enemy's military power be undermined.
(9:267)

This revolutionary belief in an "inner front" in war was, like his

military strategy, partly developed from his father's practices. While most

conquerors (i.e., the Persians) had little regard for the customs or

conditions of people they conquered, Philip was mindful of the fact that if

the conquered lands were to be of any use to him,they must be in good

conditiion and the people reasonably well disposed toward his rule. He

displayed this understanding brilliantly when he organized the League of

Corinth, theoretically a power sharing arrangement between Philip and the

Greek city-states. In actuality, he could influence any decision in his favor

due to his military dominance, but the public relations value of the League

was significant.

Alexander's unique interpretation of his father's practice was his

extension of the policy of power sharing to non-Greek peoples. Its basis was

his rejection of some of the most basic Greek teachings.

> . . .brought up in Plato's theory that all barbarians (non-Greeks),
> were enemies of the Greeks by nature, and in that of Aristotle that
> all barbarians were slaves by nature. . .Alexander had been able to
> test the smugness of the Greeks by actual contact with the
> barbarians,. . .and experience had apparently convinced him of the
> essential sameness of all people. . . . (11:136)

This belief in the basic "sameness" of all people allowed Alexander to

consider his conquered enemies as subjects to be wisely ruled rather than

threats to be eliminated or as prizes to be exploited. It is to Alexander's

credit that he was able to make such a radical leap in basic beliefs; it was

to his army's benefit that he did.

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The objective of Alexander's political strategy was to ". . .pacify and not antagonize his enemy, so as to limit the number of battles he would have to fight . . ." (9:285), and to produce a secure base from which he could continue his advance. His methods to attain these ends varied.

Initially, as he gained power, he took pains to cement his relations with the League of Corinth. While he may have regarded it as a temporary expedient, its value as an instrument of policy must have been as apparent to him as it was to his father. It provided the semblance of legality that allowed the Greeks to accept him as their supreme representative. (9:266)

His approach to Asia Minor was as a liberator of the former Greek cities there. He offered them not only freedom from Persia, but also self-determination—he left to the citizens the choice of government that they preferred, with himself as their ally. Stated more practically, he allied himself with any anti-Persian faction he could locate, irrespective of their political outlook, and with their aid he created an inner front which, as he advanced, progressively destroyed Persian authority (many cities revolted before he even reached them), and left a friendly country in his rear. (9:92)

The mantle of liberation served Alexander equally well as he advanced down the Mediterranean coast and into Egypt. These areas had all been conquered by the Persians at one time or another. Once he crossed the Tigris River, however, he encountered a different situation.

> . . .Eastward of (the Tigris) he was faced with the homelands of the
> Iranians, in which the people were loyal to the Persian monarchy and
> to whom the idea of liberation would be meaningless. The
> psychological war. . .would prove ineffective here. . . . (9:269)

Alexander's solution was as simple as it was effective.

> . . .Because he could no longer win over the people, he decided to
> win over their leaders. . .(the) satraps. . . Would it not be more

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> profitable for them to acknowledge him their king and thereby retain
> their satrapies, than to remain loyal to a man who had twice
> abandoned his army. . .His appeal was to their self-interest.
> (9:270)

Again, Alexander was willing to share power to his own benefit. After the victory at Arbela, any satrap who surrendered his domain peacefully retained his position. Conflicts were lessened, his rear was secure, and Alexander was able to keep the majority of his army together to advance. The advance was facilitated because word of his magnanimity moved ahead of him and generally prepared the populace for the changeover to his rule.

Retention of the ancient system of satrapies as the basic administrative unit of the government allowed a smooth transition into Alexander's ultimate objective--long-term rule of the empire. He proposed to implement this by a unification of the empire. (11:230) Politically, this was to be achieved by the sharing of power. Economically his strategy would dictate strong support for commerce once the Persian treasuries were captured. While the unification that Alexander sought was never achieved due to his early death, it was not for lack of planning or vision on his part.

Alexander's political strategy for conquest and rule was based on the idea of sharing power with the conquered peoples in order to gain their support for his rule, secure bases for the advance of his troops and insure a relatively peaceful conquest. This theory of partnership was grounded on his belief in the sameness of all men and driven by his need for an "inner front" or psychological war to support the "outer front" physical war being waged by his troops. His political strategy strongly supported his national objectives and enabled his military strategy to achieve much of its success.

G. Military Tactics

Military tactics or battlefield strategy can be defined as the art and science of the battlefield employment of forces to achieve national objectives. (6:11) Tactics are the lowest level in the overall strategy process but are critical to the success of the higher levels of the strategy process. The battle of Arbela is an excellent example of Alexander's genius for tactical employment of troops.

The site of the battlefield was on the plains of Gaugemela some sixty miles west of Arbela (modern Erbil in Iraq). Alexander commanded about 7000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry (9:167); he was opposed by King Darius with approximately 45,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, and 200 chariots. (3:275) The Persian cavalry was the equal of the Macedonian, and in it lay Darius' hope for victory. While their infantry superiority appears massive, the Persians had already lost many of their best commanders and troops in earlier battles. The majority of their infantry were not seasoned fighters but peasants who had been rounded up and trained specifically to meet Alexander.

Darius' army had been at the site of the battle for some time prior to Alexander's arrival. The Macedonian force arrived at approximately dawn on 30 September 331 B.C., but Alexander declined battle to reconnoiter the area. The next morning he deployed his forces for the engagement.

Darius' strategy was simple:

> The plan of attack. . .was dictated by his cavalry superiority and his chariots; it was to envelop both flanks of his enemy, an operation facilitated by the greater length of his battle front. He based his hopes on two powerful cavalry wings.
> The army was marshalled in two lines; the forward line, except for its centre, consisted exclusively of cavalry, and the rear line mainly, if not entirely, in infantry. . .Its centre was commanded by

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Darius, who was also in supreme command; its left wing by Bessus, satrap of Bacteria...; and its right wing by Mazaeus, former satrap of Syria. . . . (9:166)

Alexander was aware of the Persian strong points and had devised a counter stroke. His analysis of the problem considered two facts: that the Persian line would be considerably longer than his (possibly twice as long); and that since the Persian front was primarily offensive in nature (cavalry), once the battle commenced they would have to move forward to strike and in doing so would open gaps in the Persian lines that, due to the poor training and nature of their infantry, would be essentially undefended. (9:167) His proposed tactics included three critical steps: he would assume a defensive order of approach and maintain that order until an opportunity arose to assume the offensive; he would advance on a right oblique order to concentrate his forces on the Persian left wing; and lastly, he, with the Companion cavalry would charge through one of the gaps showing in the Persian lines when both Persian wings attempted to envelop his forces. (9:167) In short, he proposed to defeat an attack of double-envelopment by an attack of penetration. (9:168)

The Macedonian order of battle is shown in Figure 1. While the two flank guards of the army are shown deploying outward, during the initial advance they were arranged in column behind the far left and far right front line units, thereby forming a hollow square when linked with the rear phalanx. The purpose of this square was defensive and was to allow the Macedonians to face and fight in all directions in case Darius' proposed envelopment was initially successful. The right wing of the army, commanded by Alexander in battle, was stronger than the left wing, commanded by Parmenion. This was because the right wing was intended to be the attacking wing that would pierce through
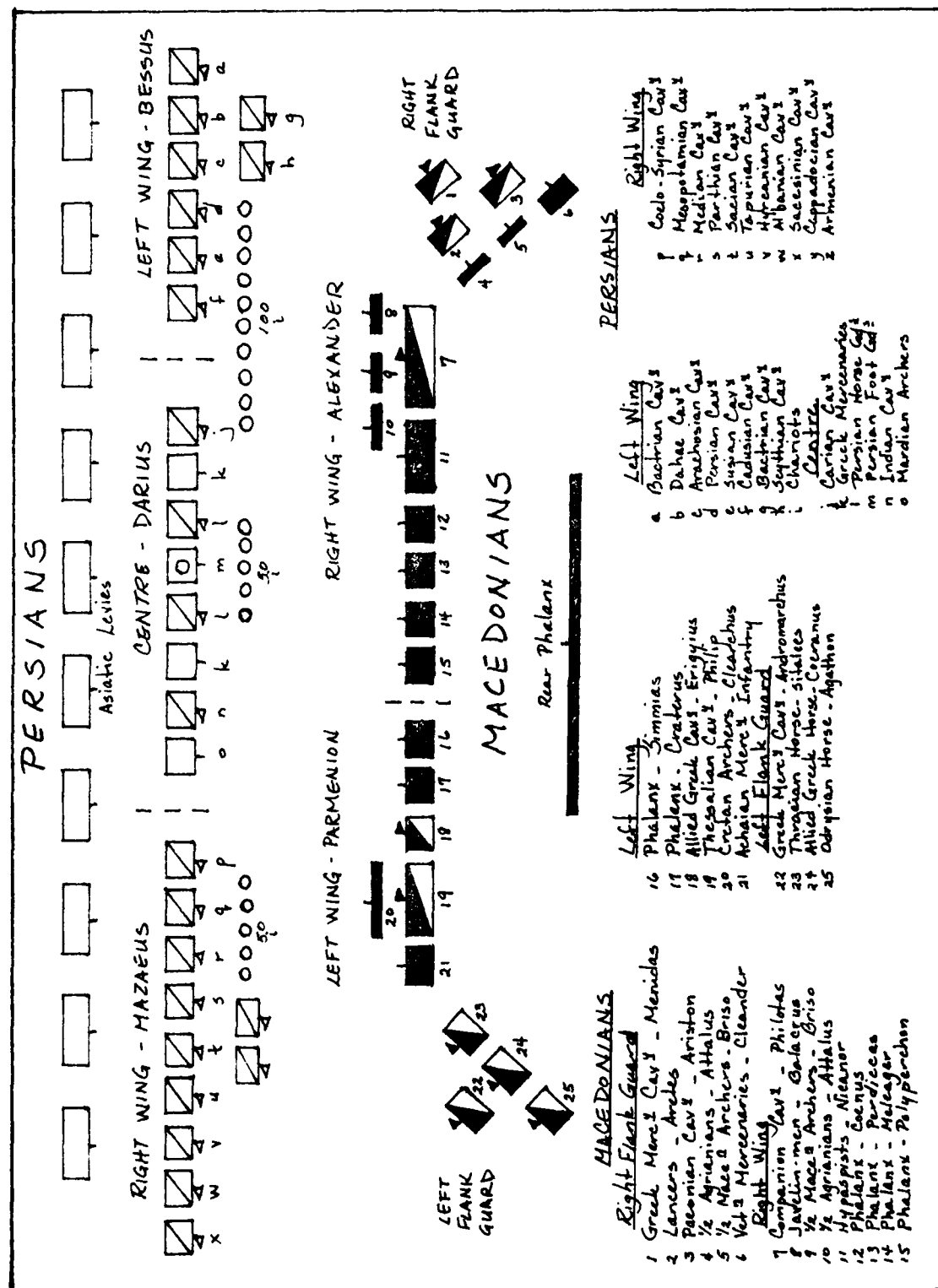
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Figure 1. Initial Orders of Battle of Arbela (9:165)

PERSIANS

Asiatic Levies

RIGHT WING - MAZAEUS

CENTRE - DARIUS

LEFT WING - BESSUS

RIGHT FLANK GUARD

MACEDONIANS

Rear Phalanx

LEFT WING - PARMENION

RIGHT WING - ALEXANDER

LEFT FLANK GUARD

MACEDONIANS

Right Flank Guard
1 Greek Merc'd Cav'y - Menidas
2 Lancers - Aretes
3 Paeonian Cav'y - Ariston
4 ½ Agrianians - Attalus
5 ½ Maced Archers - Brise
6 Vol'd Mercenaries - Cleander

Right Wing
7 Companion Cav'y - Philotas
8 Javelin-men - Balacrus
9 ½ Maced Archers - Brise
10 ½ Agrianians - Attalus
11 Hypaspists - Nicanor
12 Phalanx - Coenus
13 Phalanx - Perdiccas
14 Phalanx - Meleager
15 Phalanx - Polyperchon

Left Wing
16 Phalanx - Simmias
17 Phalanx - Craterus
18 Allied Greek Cav'y - Erigyius
19 Thessalian Cav'y - Philip
20 Cretan Archers - Cleadmus
21 Achaian Merc'y Infantry

Left Flank Guard
22 Greek Merc'y Cav'y - Andromachus
23 Thracian Horse - Sitalces
24 Allied Greek Horse - Coeranus
25 Odrysian Horse - Agathon

PERSIANS

Left Wing
a Bactrian Cav'y
b Dahae Cav'y
c Arachosian Cav'y
d Persian Cav'y
e Susian Cav'y
f Cadusian Cav'y
g Bactrian Cav'y
h Scythian Cav'y
i Chariots

Centre
j Carian Cav'y
k Greek Mercenaries
l Persian Horse Gd:
m Persian Foot Gd:
n Indian Cav'y
o Mardian Archers

Right Wing
p Coelo-Syrian Cav'y
q Mesopotamian Cav'y
r Median Cav'y
s Parthian Cav'y
t Sacian Cav'y
u Tapurian Cav'y
v Hyrcanian Cav'y
w Albanian Cav'y
x Sacesinian Cav'y
y Cappadocian Cav'y
z Armenian Cav'y

Darius' lines while the left wing was primarily to hold off the expected Persian attack and, if necessary, even give ground into the square until the right could be successful.

The battle itself opened with Alexander's oblique advance across the plain towards the Persian left wing. Darius responded by launching Bessus with the Scythian and Bactrian heavy cavalry (Fig. 1, units g, h) to stop Alexander's advance and to turn his flank. Alexander met them with three units of medium cavalry (Fig. 2, units 1, 3, 6), and Darius reinforced his initial commitment with another unit of horsemen (Fig. 2, unit a). A general cavalry engagement developed with both sides vying for the initial advantage.

About this time, Darius chose to release the chariots on his left wing against the Macedonian right wing phalanxes. These chariots were specially outfitted with swords affixed to the horses' yokes and scythes fixed in the rims of the wheels, ". . . .to cut to pieces whatever came in the way of the horses. . . ."(3:245) While the chariots had once been extremely effective against massed infantry formations, Alexander's men had specific tactics to combat them. The chariots were initially met with volleys from the archers and javelin troops deployed in front of the right wing (Fig. 1, units 8, 9, 10) which took their toll on both horses and charioteers. As the remaining chariots reached the phalanxes, the troops opened ranks and allowed them to pass through. They forced the horses into the open lanes using their long sarissas. It was left to the peltasts behind the phalanxes to surround and finish off the charioteers.

At approximately this time, Darius

> . . . .released all or most of his remaining cavalry on both his wings
> with the aim of crushing Alexander on the left and Parmenion on the
> right. . . .the crucial mistake would appear to have been that instead
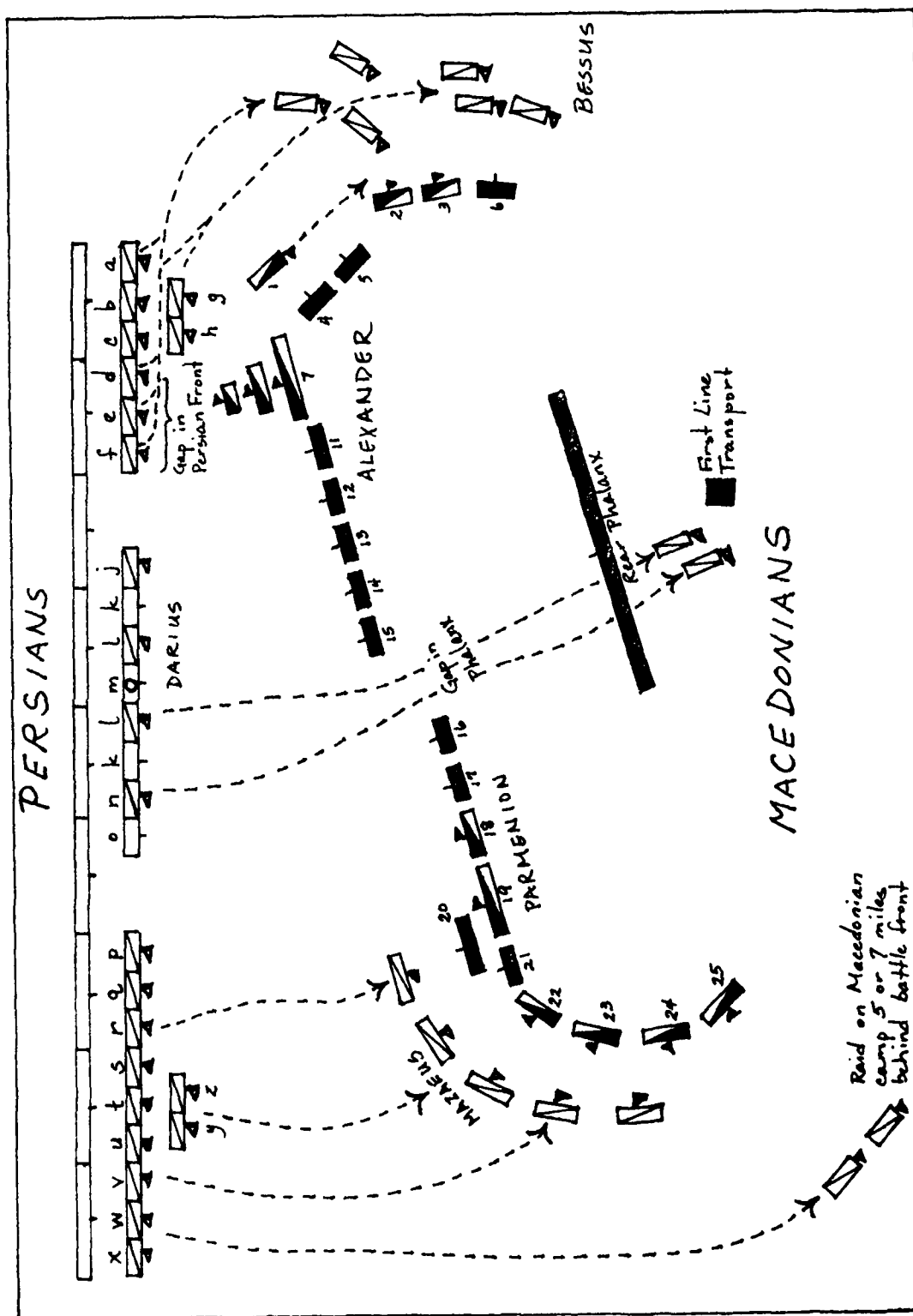
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Figure 2.   The Battle of Arbela (9:171)

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of most of the cavalry of the Persian left wing being directed
against Alexander's Companions. . .the whole galloped toward Bessus.
This may have been due to a misunderstanding. . .or again. . .it may
have been because it was met by such a hail of missiles from the
javelinmen and archers who were posted in front of the Companions
that the horsemen instinctively swerved to their left to avoid it
and then joined those galloping toward Bessus. (9:173)

Whatever the reason, the movement of the Persian cavalry forces to the
right opened the gap that Alexander had been waiting for. He formed the
Companions into a wedge and led them, the hypaspists, and the four right
brigades of the heavy phalanx (Fig. 2, units 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) directly
at King Darius. The battle raged fiercely for a short time but it soon became
obvious that the Macedonian troops were gaining the upper hand. Darius, as he
had at Issus, succumbed to terror and galloped away from the field. As news
of Darius' flight spread, the center and left wings of his army began to
waiver and the tide of battle turned to Alexander. Most of the huge masses of
infantry in the Persian second line of battle were never deployed. (4:374)

On the left wing of the Macedonian lines, the battle was not faring as
well. The onslaught of Mazaeus' heavy cavalry was almost more than Parmenion
could cope with and the Persians initially held the advantage. To make
matters worse, the two left-most phalanxes (Fig. 2, units 16, 17) were so
heavily engaged that they were not able to maintain contact with the units
attacking with Alexander, and a major gap developed in Alexander's own lines.
Through this gap charged two squadrons of Darius' cavalry (Fig. 2, units 1, n);
and had they turned left to engage Alexander's charging phalanxes in the rear,
they might have won the day for the Persians. Instead they continued straight
ahead and after slashing through the rear phalanx they fell upon the
Macedonian baggage train and began to loot it. The rear phalanx, however,
reformed itself, attacked the Persian cavalry, and drove it away from the
train.

As the situation on the left became desparate, Parmenion sent a message to Alexander to ask for help. The message arrived shortly after Darius' flight and Alexander wheeled the Companions around to assist. As luck would have it his relief column ran directly into the Persian cavalry retreating from the baggage train attack and again bitter fighting ensued. Most of the Persian cavalry here were wiped out but they effectively stopped the Companions from providing any aid to Parmenion. (4:383)

Luckily, however, the news of Darius' retreat had begun to reach this sector and Mazaeus' attack had faltered. Taking advantage of this, Parmenion rallied his Thessalian heavy cavalry and was able to drive off the Persian attack and complete the victory. When Alexander and the Companions finally arrived, Mazaeus was in full retreat; and Alexander turned to the pursuit of Darius. He pursued the former great king to the town of Arbela but found that Darius had escaped him. Alexander decided to halt and consolidate his victory before attempting to continue.

Overall casualties to both sides are hard to pinpoint but the Persians are believed to have lost some 40,000 troops while Alexander lost approximately 300. (3:319) Superior tactical ability enabled Alexander to win a major strategic victory without significant losses. The victory removed the last major military force in the Empire, and, equally important, it gained the geographical and financial base on which his empire would be built. The tactics thereby directly supported his military strategy, his grand strategy, and his overall objectives of conquest and rule.

H. Political Tactics

As was previously noted, Alexander's political strategy revolved around a sharing of power with the liberated/conquered peoples. An examination of the political tactics used to carry out this sharing, while at the same time retaining the actual reins of power, can still be of value to students in today's world. For this discussion political tactics will be defined as actions or maneuvers employed in the execution of political strategy.

One element that did much to support Alexander's political tactics was his very significant reputation for fairness and moderation in respect to the peoples he conquered. This stemmed from his belief of the "sameness" of all peoples (described earlier). While he was every bit an autocrat who did not hesitate to have opponents murdered or cities razed if necessary, he felt a great sense of responsibility for the peoples under his rule. This was reflected in many ways, and one example was significant. When he returned from India, he discovered that many of the men he had left in charge of major cities had taken advantage of their positions:

> . . .Kleandros. . .and . . .Sitalkes, who had been in command at Ecbatana. . .were accused by the Medes of tomb-robbing and rapacity and brutality. Alexander. . .found the complaints confirmed; and. . .they were arrested, tried, and put to death. The exemplary punishment cf these two senior officers had a most salutary effect on the feelings of the governed. (2:233)

While it is difficult to describe fairness as a "political tactic," the belief in his basic fairness was an important element in the fairly passive acquiescence to Alexander's rule by many.

The political tactic of primary importance was the administration of the conquered lands under Alexander's power sharing strategy. With few

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exceptions, he allowed the liberated/conquered peoples to be governed by whatever measures would secure their loyalty, facilitate transition from the Persian rule, and preserve his authority. In doing so, he assumed the relationship to the peoples which best suited the situation. For example: each former Greek city-state of Asia Minor was given its independence and established as a free ally of Alexander's; each Phoenician city-kingdom (except Tyre) was allowed to retain its king and was established as a subject ally; Egypt was organized under Alexander's tri-deputy organization (see below) with an Egyptian as its civil head but Alexander as supreme ruler and god; Persia retained its system of satraphies, modified to the tri-deputy concept, with Alexander as King; the portions of India that he conquered retained their kings but both recognized Alexander as a sort of feudal overlord. (9:277) In this way people came to accept the belief that Alexander had their best interests at heart.

Some precautions were taken to insure control: the main fortresses of the empire such as Tyre, Gaza, Memphis, and Babylon, were placed under Macedonian commanders directly responsible to Alexander (9:268); the satrapies of Asia Minor and the Middle East acted as military checks on the independent city-states and city-kingdoms: in India, while the Rajahs of Taxiles and Porus retained their kingdoms, Alexander built the two old rivals to equal strength to balance one against the other. In spite of these somewhat obvious controls, however, the majority of the population accepted Alexander as the best possible ruler they could hope for.

To govern the vast land areas of Persia, Alexander chose to retain the satraphy as the basic administrative unit but to make a major modification of the power structure within it. Whereas each satrap had previously possessed

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almost absolute power within his area (controlling military, political, and financial matters), Alexander reduced the position to simply one of a chief adminstrator of civil affairs. A trusted Greek or Macedonian officer was left as the commander of military forces in the area, and all financial affairs were consolidated under a Greek or Macedonian comptroller. All three officials reported directly to Alexander and thereby formed a system in which two members could always check the other and any one could report discrepancies to Alexander. This tri-deputy approach became the general rule and solved the major problem of the satrapial system - that of excessive independence of the satraps from the central ruler. Further, it was perfectly suited to Alexander's desire to achieve a smooth transition of power by retaining many of the satraps in place. This concept became the backbone for the control of the empire.

The political aim of pacification of the people was further supported by Alexander's tolerance for local religious customs and beliefs. In Egypt and in Babylon he reinstated the ancient gods and respected their temples. This in the eyes of the people and the priests, certified the validity of his rule. It was a marked contrast to the Persians who had desecrated the old religions.

Another effective, if controversial step was Alexander's integration of large numbers of Persian troops into his army. He felt that if ". . .he was to be king of the barbarians, . . .he must permit the barbarians to enter into full responsible partnership with him and have their own stake in his success. . ."(11:160) These troops were to serve him admirably later, thereby confirming his faith in them.

Alexander took pains to protect as much of the conquered territories as possible so as to preserve the existing economic order.

. . .Wilchen points out that 'his extensive money gifts to his army
were a compensation for the prohibition of plundering the conquered
districts, which for political reasons, he thought necessary'. . .
(9:285)

This tactic allowed life for most of the conquered peoples to go on with

little significant change and further assisted in his acceptance.

To facilitate long term rule of the population, Alexander was convinced

of the need to unify the empire along economic as well as political lines.

With respect to this unification

. . .the two most powerful instruments. . .were the cities he built
and the financial system he inaugurated. He realized that trade
within his empire was the greatest of mixers, because it brought all
conditions of men into contact, and with the exchange of commodities
went the exchange of ideas. Cities were the centers of trade. . .He
built cities - his Alexandrias - on the great trade routes. . .
(9:273)

Additionally many of the military settlements Alexander established, although

originally designed to support his logistics and communications lines,

developed into cities and trade centers.

The establishment of a financial system was an economic tactic that

strongly supported the political aim of unification. Alexander accomplished

this by first creating a common currency for the empire and using it to

release into circulation the Persian gold hoard. This massive infusion of

wealth into the world system began to generate a vast amount of commerce which

in turn drew more Greeks to the east, increased intermixing, and generated

more commerce. (9:275)

Political tactics thus provided the actions which actually affected the

people and influenced them to support Alexander's rule. These tactics

provided a viable, controllable system of government that worked to the

satisfaction of all concerned. In conjunction with Alexander's reputation for

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fairness, the tactics employed to secure the loyalty of the population allowed Alexander to complete his conquest of Persia with a minimum of bloodshed. Economic tactics used in conjunction with the political tactics allowed him to begin working toward unification of the empire before his untimely death.

Chapter Three

CONCLUSION

A. Analysis of Alexander's Strategy Using the ACSC
    Strategy Process Model

Alexander's conquest of Persia is well suited for analysis by the ACSC
Strategy Process Model. It possesses fairly clear cut, successive levels of
strategy which flow from and support specific objectives. As a
soldier-stateman Alexander's ability to control the military, political, and
economic areas of government provides good examples of how all the instruments
of power can be utilized in a coordinated manner to achieve an objective.

While Alexander proclaimed a war of revenge as the national objective for
the Persian invasion, it is generally agreed that this was done to insure
public support for the venture. As the hegemon of the League of Corinth, his
personal objectives were the more relevant ones. These were initially to
increase his own power and to secure at least Asia Minor from the Persians.
As victory followed victory, Alexander's objective became the conquest and
rule of the whole Persian empire.

The grand strategy to accomplish these ends was relatively simple. His
military forces had to defeat any force that opposed him, and his political
and economic actions had to secure the loyalty of the conquered people or
their leaders. This last would support his military advances by insuring a
secure rear and would allow a smooth transition of power that would benefit
the long term rule of the empire.

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The key to Alexander's military strategy was his employment of his forces outward from secure bases and supported by strong communications/logistics lines. This practice enhanced the effectiveness of an already superbly trained force and insured their victory.

Alexander's political strategy was embodied in the concept of a sharing of power with the conquered peoples to secure their support. Its aim was to pacify the population, limit the number of battles to be fought, and secure rear areas. Economic strategy, while not a main player in the conquest, became the cultivation of commerce as a means toward laying the foundation for extended rule.

At the battle of Arbela, Alexander's penetration attack to defeat Darius' double envelopment attempt was sound battlefield strategy and succeeded masterfully. The victories his tactics generated were the basis for the success of the overall military strategy and facilitated attainment of his political aims.

Political tactics greatly assisted Alexander in the conquest and government of the acquired lands. These ranged from the retention of the satrapy system under a tri-deputy leadership structure, to the official support of local religions. Economic tactics were used to support the political aim of unification, and these included the minting of a common system of currency.

B. Principles of Linkage, Future, and Reality

There are three fundamental principles of strategy formulation: linkage, future, and reality. (6:15) How are these three principles reflected in Alexander's strategies?

With reference to linkage:

> The principle of linking ends and means is the essence of the entire
> strategy process. . .Each step of the process must be based on and
> support the previous step to form a direct linkage from national
> ends to tactical means. (6:16)

Alexander's objectives laid out a clear target at which to aim. His subordinate strategies, each on its own level, supported the end objectives and each other thereby increasing the effectiveness of each.

". . .The second principle governing strategy is that it be oriented toward the future." (6:16) Alexander's grand strategy was to win military victories and secure the public loyalty required to rule for an extended period. It was always oriented toward providing him with a fairly unified kingdom possessing working political and economic systems once the conquest was completed.

"The third principle of strategy is that all decisions in the strategy process must deal with the real world rather than illusions. . . ." (6:17) While this principle seeks to insure that strategists do not become more involved with "what might be" rather than with "what is", it must be noted that Alexander accomplished a number of things during his campaigns that were considered impossible. In his defense, he never lost a significant engagement or failed to achieve an objective that he set out to accomplish. His consistent victories indicate that his conception of reality was more accurate than that of the conventional thinkers of his time.

Alexander's strategies followed all three of the principles of strategy formulation quite clearly.

C. Summary

Alexander the Great was a unique individual whose career provides an exceptional opportunity to study the formulation, coordination, and execution of strategy, both political and military, on a grand scale. The opportunity is all the more valuable because of the variety of military engagements and political situations that he successfully confronted. The ACSC Strategy Process Model offers the student a valuable tool to the understanding of Alexander's strategies. Its use not only facilitates the study of Alexander, but it provides the student a solid framework on which to build his own strategy formulation process for the future.

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APPENDIX I

A CHRONOLOGY OF

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

YEAR (BC)	EVENT
356	Birth of Alexander to Philip II, King of Macedonia.
340	Obtains first battle experience.
338	Commands left wing of Macedonian army at the Battle of Chaeronea.
336	Becomes King of Macedonia.
334	Leads army into Asia. Battle of the Granicus
333	Defeats King of Persia at Battle of Issus.
333-331	Consolidates conquests in Asia Minor. Captures Tyre. Deprives Persia of all seapower. Recognized as Pharaoh of Egypt.
331	Defeat of Darius at Battle of Arabia.
327-326	Advances into India. Defeat of Porus at Battle of Hydaspes.
323	Dies at Babylon, age 32 years.